2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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case, while exogamy is generally observed, the association of particular groups of men and animals seems to make no great emotional appeal to the Shilluk—to be but little loaded with affect—compared with the similar feelings among the Dinka. We may also refer to the suggestion put forward by Hofmayr,[1] that the incoming Shilluk had a definite totemic system, which became less important as the cult of Nyakang developed and the newcomers mixed with the earlier inhabitants of what is now the Shilluk country. Evidence for or against this hypothesis may be forthcoming when we know more of the beliefs of the Luo and Anuak. We therefore leave the subject with the observation that the existence of a partial totemism of the Dinka pattern among the Shilluk would be explained if the earlier inhabitants absorbed by Nyakang and his horde—it will be remembered that these included animals which he turned into men—were Dinka, or folk with kindred beliefs.

Dr. Tucker has given us some interesting information which, though it does not actually concern totemism, might at first sight be confused with it and is worthy of further investigation. The inhabitants of a village, Pathuor, mark a scorpion several inches in length in raised cicatricial tissue on the shoulder—left for men and right for women so that it is not hidden by the shoulder cloth. The reason they give is that they "desire to cultivate the strength of the scorpion"; yet they kill without scruple scorpions that they find in their huts. Other designs scarred on the shoulder, described by Dr. Tucker, include the horse, tortoise, aeroplane, and the sun. He reports a most curious instance of cicatrization as a result of a village quarrel. One village, Paalo, decided that it would no longer eat the fish *okok*, because the village Pajur, with which it was at enmity, is situated at the edge of a creek where many *okok* are caught. The Paalo proceeded to represent an *okok* in raised cicatrices on the shoulder; Pajur retaliated by avoiding lemons—because Paalo, living near the mission, grows lemons—and they scarred lemons on their shoulders. This was about a year ago; goodwill now reigns between the villages, and consequently the *okok* and the lemon are no longer avoided.

Turning now to the king and royal family, we would emphasize that the Shilluk king is the supreme spiritual and temporal ruler, and that to separate his functions—as for the sake of clarity we are about to do—is an artificial device. Nevertheless, we shall now

[1] Op. cit., 233.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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644 or commoners, and even close relatives, including half-brothers by
565 the same father, though connection with a full brother or a uterine
[836] half-brother would not be permitted. Royal daughters are treated
[562] with great respect, may exercise considerable influence in district affairs, and when elderly may help and advise the local chief, but they never become guardians of shrines as do the king's wives and widows.

643 We did not hear of the rivalry between princes leading to actual
669 warfare for the throne, though considering how commonly the Shilluk quarrel among themselves this seemed probable, and some of the old traditional quarrels between North and South may have originated in such rivalry. It is related that Nyakwac killed the surviving
[173] children of his great uncle Nyadwai (the twelfth king), though three of them had already reigned before him, but we do not think this was a common practice.

644 The children of the king are called *nyireth*; his grandchildren are
565 *nyinyireth*, and his great grandchildren are *kwanyireth*; their children again may be called *kwanyireth*. The four generations are regarded as of royal blood in descending degrees, and even *kwanyireth* follow the
• [304] royal practice of retaining their lower central incisors instead of having them knocked out as commoners do, but the children of *kwanyireth* are treated as commoners. The descendants of the king form a privileged group; both sons, grandsons, and their children are called *kwareth*. The title *kwanyireth dwong* (great *kwanyireth*) is given to the first generation of *kwanyireth* or to a *kwanyireth* who has become a chief.

565 Apart from the king and the royal family, but having the closest ceremonial connection with the former, are the *orore*,[1] who trace their origin to the fifth Shilluk king, Ocalo. They play a prominent part

[173] [1] Rightly qualified by Mr. Munro as a "class . . . full of mystery" in his "Installation of the Reth of the Choi (King of the Shilluks)", which we reprint as an appendix. They certainly require further study. Hofmayr states that royal descendants become *orore* after a special degradation ceremony which has to be carried out by stealth. His account is far from clear, but officially he agrees that the only *orore* are the descendants of Ocalo (*op. cit.*, pp. 260–2). Mr. Hearty confirms this, and in answer to our questions obtained the following account of the origin of the *orore*. During the reign of king Ocalo there was trouble between the Nuer and Shilluk. The sons of Ocalo, who led the Shilluk against the Nuer, were all killed except Dowal, considered very insignificant by the king, who felt that there would be no chance of one of his offspring reigning since all his important sons had been killed. In a rage Ocalo took the sacred spears of Nyakang and threw them in the river, but Dowal succeeded in rescuing the last and demanded of his father why he did this. When Ocalo answered that his sons were dead, a quarrel ensued between father and son, leading Dowal to say that the sacrifices to his father should not be killed with a spear and to threaten to degrade his father's descendants. When Dowal became king his half-brothers were degraded to the level of commoners, with the name Nyigel instead of their previous appellation Kayo. As compensation they were granted an important part in the installation and funerary rites of the king, as well as in certain religious ceremonies at Fashoda.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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to the bride-wealth of her brother's son. She may demand the cattle for her brother's son from her own husband, and he will always give them; should he refuse she might threaten to leave him. We were told that a boy who had no *waja*, *nywaja*, or sister, would be poor indeed. The two latter do not actually contribute, but in the lad's position of *uza* to his *nywaja* and brother to his sister he gets a portion of the bride-wealth given on their marriage.

We could obtain little reliable information relating to age-classes or similar organizations, and formed the opinion that the institution was of little importance and was probably dying out, and that neither knocking out teeth or scarring the forehead could properly be regarded as a puberty rite.[1] Both girls and boys—except the royal family down to the *kwanyireth*—have the four lower incisors knocked out, but no reason could be discovered. Mr. Heasty informs us that the lower milk incisors are taken out—or the young teeth may be burnt away—in babies so young that the teeth may not have come through the gum. This is done both by *kwareth* and commoners, lest the child should become ill or die. The permanent teeth are removed in the tenth or eleventh year and buried near the parents' house. Girls and boys are treated separately in groups, but we could not discover that the operation gave rise to any social bond. Here we may add that to knock out a man's front teeth (presumably this refers to the upper jaw) is considered a grave offence, and in the old days a fine of ten head of cattle was imposed.

Foreheads are scarred at much the same age or a little later, two or three lines of scars, called *tai*, being made, which in the young stand out like beads across the brow and are regarded as greatly enhancing the appearance. This also is done in groups by some man who is expert at the work. Forehead scarring seems to come nearer to being an initiation ceremony in the common use of the term, and at this period the lads cease to sleep in their parents' hut, they go to the cattle byre and beat the drums and take full part in the dances. It is true that lads do dance before this, but rather in play and more as imitators than participators, whereas after head scarring the dance becomes an important occupation with great social significance, for when a lad dances with the warriors he is considered a man. Though age-classes have not the obvious social importance that they have among Nuer and Dinka, lads scarred at the same time were

[1] Mr. Heasty notes that in the neighbourhood of Doleib Hill there have been no new age-classes for many years.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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grouped together in battle, and still eat together ceremoniously, e.g. at mourning feasts. The *kwanyireth* have their foreheads scarred in the same manner as commoners. Lines of scar marks are also made on the breast, across the shoulder blade, and two rectangular masses above the umbilicus; these are considered to have no tribal significance but are done for the sake of adornment and are said to be admired by the opposite sex.

We are indebted to Mr. Heasty for a note on Shilluk customs, which seem to indicate that the milk avoidances of the Nilotes are dependent on fear of contamination associated with the sexual act.

A young woman does not drink milk under any circumstances, though a woman who is nursing a baby may, as do old women past the reproductive age. Only small boys herd the cattle and milk them, for once a boy has reached maturity there is the danger that he may have had sexual contact, when if he milked, or handled manure, or even walked among the cattle in their pens, he would cause them to become sterile. These beliefs are held so strongly that a child who goes to his neighbours to drink milk must have a bath before he returns home, lest milk might adhere to him, be mixed with food, and be eaten by someone who was unclean. If a man has had sexual relations with his wife or another he is considered unclean and does not drink milk until the sun has set the following day. Mr. Heasty could not discover that anyone objected to drinking milk drawn by himself, nor does anyone avoid taking milk and meat together. The pottery vessels used for milk are not used for any other purpose.

A woman cooks for her husband and leaves the hut while he eats, but it is not shameful for men and women to be seen eating together, and after a man has eaten the main part of a meal a woman and her friends, usually her unmarried *nyiwa* (if her *gol* is not distant), may sit and eat while he continues his meal. A newly married couple do not eat together. Small reed mats called *paro* are used to put over pots of food to keep off flies and dust, and out of respect a woman might stand one of these upright to screen her face while eating or drinking.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

are increasing in numbers. The average number of children reared in one family may be from three to four. The number of children born by one woman is not low; women with ten children are no exception. But as a rule no more than three or four children grow up to maturity in one family, the rest dying from want of reasonable nursing. If in course of time the natives are taught to take better care of their children, the population will no doubt strongly increase. A cause of the low birth rate in many families is the fact that a man is not supposed to have intercourse with his wife while a baby is nursing, that is, till the baby is from two to two and a half years old. They consider it a great shame for a woman to become pregnant before this time has elapsed. If such a case happens, they generally will say that the woman has committed adultery.

OUTWARD APPEARANCE OF THE PEOPLE

The Shilluks are tall in figure, the average height of the men being nearly 1.80 m.[1] They are generally lean, rather narrow in the shoulders, and have but little calves; their arms and legs are long, especially the legs below the knees and the forearms; hands and feet are small. A characteristic posture of the Shilluk man is to stand on one leg, and bending the other, press the sole of his foot against the inner surface of the knee, while one hand holds a spear stuck into the ground; he will stand thus for hours, looking admiringly at his cattle. They are very clever in running and jumping, and are capable of sustaining considerable fatigue.

Their skin is dark, almost black; albinoes seem to be rare. The physical appearance of the Shilluks is not that of pure negroes, they might rather be called negroids, in spite of their dark colour. Most of them have a fierce, sometimes a proud, haughty look. The cheek-bones and lips are protruding, but not excessively; the nose is flat, but high noses are not infrequent. Young people of both sexes are finely built, while in old age they generally become very thin and bony. Their gait is erect and elastic.

PAINTING THE BODY

What makes the Shilluks look most ugly and almost frightful in the eyes of a newcomer, is their habit of smearing the whole body. While the lower part is covered with ashes, the breast and head are painted with red earth or with chalk, or, if they can afford it, with oil or butter. Sometimes the whole body is painted white or red, and lines or figures are drawn across the face.

EXTRACTION OF INCISORS

Like most Nilotic negroes the Shilluk remove the lower incisors; this is done in early childhood; its omission would, in the belief of the natives, cause sickness; for instance, a case occurred where the teeth were taken out to cure sore eyes; a woman who had just had them removed from her child, said that unless they were taken out, her child would undoubtedly be deformed in some way, when it grew to maturity. Another explanation for extracting the teeth

[1] Five feet ten inches.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

304 [565]

is, that this will keep them from using abusive language. — Some natives say, members of the royal family do not remove the incisors; but of this I am not sure.

[641] [413] TRIBAL MARKS

The tribal marks of the Shilluks, women as well as men, are from three to five rows of dots across the forehead. The regular instrument for tattooing these dots into the skin is a crude iron similar in shape to our scalpel. But not infrequently individuals are met with who have not these marks. Sometimes women have from one to three rows of small scars across their foreheads. These are in most or all cases simply caused by wearing bands of buttons drawn tightly across the forehead. Tattoosings on other parts of the body are seldom.

302 413 SHAVING

The women wear either no or only short hair on the head; they shave their heads with a razor consisting of a straight piece of thin iron, whose edge is sharpened, or with a short piece of iron with one side beaten out to a thin edge. But lacking a razor they use almost any metal instrument they can get hold of for this purpose. Both sexes scrupulously remove any hair on the body by pulling it out with a kind of pincers; the men even pull out their beard and eyelashes. — They do not circumcise.

302 HAIR-DRESSINGS

The men, chiefly youths, indulge in elaborate hair-dresses of varied forms. Such hair-dressing takes several hours to arrange, and has to last for weeks, the natural occasion for renewing it being a village-dance, where everyone wants to appear at his best; in dressing it, the hair is first loosened with a stick, which serves at the same time for scratching the head. Then it is twisted and brought into the right form by means of a mixture of gum, mud, and sometimes cow-dung; from time to time oil or butter is poured on it. In order not to spoil the hair-dressings while sleeping, the neck is supported by neck-supports. Sometimes the hair is bleached either yellowish-red or grey. Bleached hair is generally not twisted or dressed, but is left standing out in all directions "like the feathers of a fighting cock." Bleaching is done by smearing a thick plaster of ashes, chalk and cow-dung on the hair and leaving it there for about two or three weeks. Another mode of bleaching is to rub the plaster well into the hair, then gathering it up from the back, and bringing it forward, forming it into the shape of a horn. While in this state, they must be very careful not to break it, lest the hair is broken off. The same result is obtained by washing the hair continually with cow-urine. These processes take the kink as well as the colour out of the hair. This bleached bristle-like hair together with their tall, thin body covered with ashes or brick-dust, and the want of eyelashes sometimes gives the people, in the eyes of one who has never seen them before, a rather frightful appearance. Boys wear their hair in little knobs, formed with red earth and fat. Cowrie-shells, in strings or single, are often twisted into the hair, and

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3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

292 a great dance. I have noted the ornaments and clothings worn by the young
535 men and girls on the occasion. They are *a)* for the men: above the ankles a
301 strip of sheep or goat skin with the hair on it outside; the same just below the knee; above it are the knee-bells, a number of metal bells each consisting in a hollow, oblong piece of iron, in which a small iron ball moves, thus producing a rattling noise; about the loins there is a skin of leopard, gepard, wild cat, or jackal, suspended on a eight to twelve-fold girdle of ostrich egg shells; the girdle may also consist of European beads; on the wrist a bracelet of brass or iron, above the elbow an ivory ring, above it a six- to eight-fold ring of ambach; about the neck they wear one or more necklaces of beads; on the head ornaments of horse-tail or other long hair, and ostrich feathers; round the forehead strips of red or white bristles are fastened; each man holds two lances, two clubs, one club-shield, the lances generally being adorned with ostrich-plumes; sometimes the skin-cloth round the waist is adorned with bells or iron chains. Face,
[302] arms, and the upper part of the body are smeared with red earth, over wich melted butter is poured and stripes of ashes are drawn. Several, if not all, of the dancers carry a dancing-stick, a long stick, bent at its upper end like the handle of a walking stick, and covered with brass or some other metal. *b)* The girls present the following appearance: above the ankles a bundle of heavy iron rings, on the loins a large antelope- or more frequently calf-skin suspended by a bundle of ostrich egg shell chains; round the neck and hanging down on the breasts a large bundle of blue or green beads; [illegible] the wrists bracelets of beads; round the forehead a string of beads; the h[illegible] sometimes dressed on the occasion; in the hair an ostrich or some other [illegible] feather is stuck, in one or two cases I saw even flowers instead of a feather; the girls are not painted, only anointed with oil.

301 The most characteristic adornments of the men are thick, heavy bracelets and armlets of iron, brass, ivory, twisted ambach, tree-bark, and cowrie shells. A wreath consisting of a strip of skin with the hair on the outside is laid round the head. Rings of metal, ambach, cowrie or bark are worn above the ankle. Women and girls also wear armlets, but not ivory ones. The legs below the
● [304] knee are loaded with heavy metal rings. Men as well as women, but chiefly the latter, pierce their ears at the top, and wear rings of brass or iron in them; sometimes merely a piece of metal or a stick is fastened in them. Both sexes wear strings of ostrich egg shells about the loins; besides these chains of cowries, of river shells, of leather, and of varied beads are frequent. Many grown-up men and youths wear a necklace of a peculiar kind of small, well-shaped, and
439 marble-like stones, which have about the size of a pigeon-egg; they are very much valued, and the natives always ask an ox in exchange for them. These

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

[facing p. 144]

Shilluk Women in arms for a mock-fight, carrying clubs, spears and a "club-shield"

Two men in arms

A Shilluk Warrior withtwo spears and a club; below knee strips of sheep-skin. Note the tattoings on the breast

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Card No	C.I.	M.I.	F.I.	U.F.I.	S.(cm)	incisors	marks L	R	B	A	dots	C.I. cm.	C.I. mm.	M.I. cm.	M.I. mm.	S. cm.	S. mm.
D 6	72.6	85.4	78.3	43.3	176.9												
C 5	77.7	84.3			183.4	+					25		777				+
B 2	70.1	89.1			182.4		+				25				+		
D10	69.8	82.6	88.8	53.1	178.4							+		+			
C 9	74.4	83.7			168.9	+	+	+	+							+	
D 4	75.3	88.0	83.7	47.4	181.4						25						
	73.3	85.5			179.5												
D 8	67.7	97.7	85.3	44.9	172.5	+					23	+					
B 8	71.6	102.2			170.0	+					22					+	
B10	71.5	100.0			169.1	+					20						
B 9	69.9	97.7			178.8	+		+	+		19						
C 4	71.9	88.2			170.2	+		+	+	+	26						
C 3	73.1	68.6			164.3	+					23			+		+	
B 6	72.1	82.0			168.3	+					24						
B 5	70.1	76.2			179.4	+					25						
B 4	71.4	71.9			179.1						30						
A10	72.5	83.7			170.4		+	+	+	+							
A 9	70.6	75.0			189.4	+											+
A 8	72.5	82.3			183.1												
A 7	75.4	80.3			167.6		+	+	+	+				+			
A 6	75.1	78.4			183.3												
A 5	71.5	85.4			174.3			+	+								
A 4	71.6	83.9			182.3			+	+								
A 3	71.8	92.0			169.0	+	+										
	71.7	85.0			174.5												
C10	74.3	86.9			158.3	+	+				31	+				+	
D 2	73.5	84.0			159.7	+	+		+	+	26						
D 1	70.0	92.8			169.0	+	+	+	+		28	+			+		+
C 2	71.5	82.6			164.9		+		+		30			+			
C 1	71.3	84.4			163.0	+	+	+	+	+	25						
	71.7	85.0			163.9												
B 3	71.6	83.3			165.0									+	+		
A 2	70.1	76.9			174.2						23			+			
A 1	72.1	91.4	86.0	43.3	184.1												
C 7	68.8	91.8			187.4						30						
D 5	68.1	82.0	77.5	42.0	185.5						23						
C 6	77.0	78.0			176.2	+	+				34		+				
	71.1	83.9			178.7												

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Card No	C.I.	N.I.	F.I.	U.F.I.	S.(cm)	incisors	marks L	R	B	A	dots	C.I. mn.	mx.	N.I. mn.	mx.	S mn.	mx.
B 7	73.6	88.0			180.8		+		+		26						
C 8	73.4	96.2			175.1			+	+					+	+		
D 7	67.0	88.7	89.7	49.6	174.6	+		+			28	+					
B 1	71.3	87.7			184.8		+				21						
D 9	67.4	79.2	93.0	50.4	181.1		+				31						
		87.5	87.9			179.2											
D 3	70.2	85.1			165.7	+	+										

The sign + means that the people practice knocking out lower incisors, or body marks.
L = Left upper arm and shoulder R= right upper arm and shoulder B= Back A= Abdomen

mn= minimum mx= maximum

Tribal Marks .

304 619 [114] The most important tribal mark among the Shilluk is one row of dots or scars on the forhead called TAI which extends from near the ear to the other ear, crossing the temples. The old generations have three rows of these dots.(12) Butt writes that "Shilluk men and women have three to five rows of dots or scars....(13) but I was unable to discover any Shilluk man or woman who had these five rows of TAI. Butt may have confused this scarification with that of the Nuer and the Dinka who make five to seven deep cuts on the forehead. A profile of a Shilluk man or woman will betray a strong resemblance to someone who has a necklace of black or brown beads stretched across his forehead. These dots are of no fixed number.(14) They vary according to the breadth of the face and the forehead. No Shilluk is exempted from this mark, but in my study I found one old fellow from the royal family (15) who happened to be born in Metema, north of Khartoum , as his mother was taken captive during the Mahdi - Shilluk war. He lived about twenty years in the north, then he came home, even having lost his Shilluk tongue. He had no TAI.

114 184 304 619 The most important tribal mark is the knocking out of the lower incissors. Seligmann wrote (16) that the royal offshoots till the fourth generation "... follow the royal practice of retaining their lower central incisors instead of having them knocked out as commoners do..." Butt also says: " Among the Shilluk the royal family alone keep their tooth intact." (17) From the results I have obtained and illustrated in table "C" we can make two observations:
a) that not a l l commoners practice the knocking out of their incisors,
b) that some royal members practice it.
304 177 [753] The Shilluk told me that this practice was universal among the commoners in the past, but now it is practiced at will. The old belief was that the failure to knock out teeth caused sickness. It must have been contact with the Arabs that changed this belief, and with this contact the habit is going to die out.

Other body marks are also made at will and have no religious significance. The people say that it is nice to have these marks on the body, especially for young men and women and for dancing festivals. These marks take many forms - scorpion, tiger, geometrical designs, or even military signs, especially that of a sergeant on the upper arm.

Clothes.

Hofmayer states that "... So gross die Aufmerksamkeit und Vorliebe für Putz und Schmuck, so gering die Sorge für die Kleider."(18) He also writes: " Während der Mann im Shilluklande fast immer ohne Kleidung ging, stand es mit dem Weibe in dieser Hinsicht anders." (19) and " Langsam beginnen nun auch unter diesem Volke, seitdem christliche Kultur und Religion ins Land gezogen ist, Anzeichen einer besseren Zeit sich einzustellen. Bereits kann man die Nacktheit der Shilluk von diesem Stande als verschwunden betrachten." (20). During my sojourn among the Shilluk I noticed one great difference among the Shilluk and the other Nilotic tribes , this being that the Shilluk were always dressed -at towns as well as in their own villages, children being the only exception - and others were not. Their dress is called in their own tongue LAUO, and consists of a piece of cloth of any colour, but mainly white. The LAUO is placed round the body, so that it reaches down to the knees and is knotted in a special way on the left shoulder by men (21) and the right shoulder by women. Women also wear some other underclothing which is well described by Hofmeyer.(22) But the question is that the LAUO is a standard Shilluk dress; it is neither European nor Arabic from the northern Sudan. It stands unique and the Nuer or the Dinka, who are supposed to have some kinship with the Shilluk, go, men and women , quite naked. Hofmayer's statement, as quoted above, was written in 1925. It is quite impossible that the Shilluk have altered one of the most important habits over a period of 30 or 50 years, taking into account the extremely conservative spirit which all authors attribute to the Shilluk and other Nilotes. Secondly, if the Shilluk men began to dress due to the introduction of Christian culture and religion, they would have adopted the European dress, (23) rather than invent a new type of dress foreign to both missionaries and Moslems. Or, if this were due to Christian culture, why did it not produce the same effect among the Dinka and Nuer, among whom comparatively more missionary work has been done than among the Shilluk ? Hofmayer contradicts himself in the same book. Cal, the second Shilluk king, who lived about 1580 A.D., before he died, washed himself, and " Nach vollendeter Waschung kleidete Cal sich an.." (24). This means that the Shilluk used to dress themselves from the beginning of their known history.

I have also no knowledge of a society in which the differences between the two sexes go, or went, as far as that which we could understand from Hofmayer's description, i.e. men go naked while women have a complicated dress system composed of two pieces for the unmarried and of three pieces for the married.

There is also a traditional ceremony of importance in the Shilluk political organisation. Every new chief of a settlement, which is a combined group of lineage hamlets, has to be confirmed in his post by the king. This takes the form of investing the new chief with a LAUO with the king "personally knotting this robe over the jago's (chief) shoulder" (25). In a similar manner, the chief of a hamlet (a lineage group, homesteads in a settlement) may be invested with a LAUO "directly from the king, or from the settlement) may be

[18] "such great attention and predilection for dress and ornamentation, so little care for the children."

[19] " while the men in Shilluk country almost always went without clothing, the women behaved differently in this respect."

[20] Slowly in the beginning, but since that time Christian culture and religion has also penetrated among these people, A sign that a better time is coming. Already one can see that the nakedness of the Shilluk is disappearing from this country."

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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ANEI KUR, RETH OF THE SHILLUK.

[FACING P. 7]

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Chapter III

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR ORIGIN

101 The reader will by this be anxious to know something of the people who inhabit this promised land, the people whom up to this I have spoken of as the Shilluk. That is the name by which they are known as a tribe both among themselves and by others. At present the tribe numbers about [161] 120,000.

142 The Shilluk are for the most part tall and lean in appearance, taller in general than the average, though the mean height of six feet attributed to them by some writers is something of an exaggeration. In features and colour they vary very much, ranging from the squat, ebony-black face with beetling brows, flat broad nose and thick lips to the long-headed aristocratic type, light in colour, with high cheek bones, long straight nose and thin lips. An almost universal 304 custom among them is to tattoo the brows so that the flesh is raised to form, as it were, a row of beads running from temple to temple. This practice of cicatrization often finds expression too in the pricking out on back, breast or arms [532] of elaborate designs in the shape of a scorpion, a fish or a lemon. The custom of knocking out the lower incisor teeth of children is still frequently practised, often, strangely enough, at the wish of the child himself, or herself, for girls also submit to the ordeal. At one time it seems to have been [565] obligatory for the children of commoners, but it is no longer so. The teeth are extracted when the child is about eleven or twelve years old, and many a pleasant-looking face is spoiled by this crude dentistry. Most native Africans have beauti- [142] fully white teeth, and it seems a pity that a child should be thus mutilated, and that a beaming smile instead of revealing two rows of lovely teeth should expose an ugly gap in the lower jaw.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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173 To the west and north was the desert inhabited by peoples
174 greater and stronger than themselves and prepared to dispute their advance in that direction; on the east the Nile ran, and behind them were the swamplands, and Dimo.
131 They had no choice then but to stay in the country where
361 they are found today, a narrow belt of land extending from Tonga in the south to Kaka in the north, a distance of about 150 miles. Inland Shilluk settlements may be found 15 miles away from the river, but generally their villages, containing from two to twenty or thirty families, stand no further than a mile or two from its banks, straggling along the whole length of the country. Since their first settling there some hardy souls have crossed the Nile and found a foothold on its eastern bank which they have gradually extended until they occupy a strip of land stretching from opposite Kodok in the north to the River Sobat in the south, and along that river for a distance of 30 miles or so. The nature of the country on the other side, however, does not differ from that of their original settlement, and the powerful Dinka tribe has always opposed their progress inland, so that those who have gone to live on the eastern bank are no better off than they were before.

565 The social structure of the Shilluk tribe is built up from a division of the people into four classes or castes. These classes are not however exclusive, for they live together in the same villages, share common tasks and recreations and even intermarry. The basis of the division is the possession of royal blood, or, ultimately, descent from Nyikang.

565 The first class is that of the Kwareth, the Royal Clan. To
644 this belong all those who are members of the royal houses tracing their ancestry directly to Nyikang. Only a member of this class is eligible for election as king. The first four generations of a king's descendants are recognized as being of royal blood and are entitled to the privileges of royalty.
[304] Thus they are permitted to retain all their teeth, they may
[301] wear an anklet of small white beads, and more than one
[292] according to the nearness of descent; they alone may dress in a leopard skin for a dance.